

HOUSE BILL 3000
By Herron

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, to enact the Prayer in the School Act of 1996.

WHEREAS, no provisions of the United States Constitution are more important than those of the First Amendment that protect our fundamental freedoms; and

WHEREAS, the most sacred of those freedoms prohibit governments from establishing religions and provide for religious freedom for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, there has been great uncertainty about the religious rights of students in public schools; and

WHEREAS, the religious liberty rights of students sometimes have been violated; and

WHEREAS, the children and citizens of this country and state ought enjoy the greatest possible religious freedom; and

WHEREAS, the time has come to end both government indoctrination and government hostility to religion; and

WHEREAS, public schools must be places where religion and religious convictions are treated with fairness and respect; and

WHEREAS, public schools uphold the First Amendment when they protect the religious liberty rights of students of any faith or belief; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly ought to act to provide a clear statement of the religious rights of students in schools; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly ought to do all it can to protect those religious rights; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Prayer in School Act of 1996”.

SECTION 2. Students in public schools shall have the right to pray alone or in groups, as long as such prayer does not disrupt the educational process or coerce others.

SECTION 3. Students shall have the right to share their faith with others.

SECTION 4. Students shall have the right to express themselves religiously in class discussions or projects.

SECTION 5. Students shall have the right to distribute religious literature, subject to reasonable limitations as to time, place, and manner.

SECTION 6. Students shall have the right to form religious clubs or other voluntary religious organizations.

SECTION 7. Schools shall have the right to teach about religions in the curriculum, but shall neither inhibit nor inculcate religion.

SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.